

**WILLMAR COMMUNITY ED & REC  
JOINT POWERS BOARD MEETING  
JANUARY 22, 2016**

Members Present: Dave Baumgart, Bill Borth, Sally Calvin, Matt Dawson, Allen Huselid, Abdiraham Ibrahim, Carol Laumer, Ross Magnuson, Audrey Nelsen, Ross Magnuson, Darin Strand, Liz VanDerBill

Staff Present: Steve Brisendine, Rob Baumgarn, Casey Hagert, Ryan Harper, Tammy Rudningen, Becky Sorenson, Jena Tollefson, Pam Vruwink, Jodi Wambeke  
City Administrator-Larry Kruse

Steve welcomed everyone and announced that three new board members were attending their first Board meeting. He asked everyone to introduce themselves.

The next item on the agenda was Officer Election. Last month was Chairman Eric Banks' last meeting. Matt Dawson nominated Darin Strand as new chairman and Dave Baumgart nominated Rachel Skretvedt as new vice chairman. The vote was unanimous for both Darin and Rachel.

Chairman Darin Strand asked for any announcements. Dave Baumgart spoke about the Baseball Booster's Belgian Waffle Feed being held tomorrow at Roosevelt. This is one of their big fund raiser for the year and he asked for support from those that could attend.

Matt Dawson talked about hockey and the outside ice. He stated that this January has had the best outside ice in recent memory, due to low snow totals and fairly decent outside temperatures. He thanked Rob Baumgarn for his help with regard to hockey. The Hockey Association has been working on growing the Rec Hockey numbers for kids who do not want to participate in traveling hockey and the numbers of participants has grown the last few years due to these new focus areas.

The Hockey Association is hoping to have summer ice this year and has been in talks with Rob and Steve about this possibility. One of the problems with summer ice, in addition to the expense, is the aging equipment at the Arena that may not be able to handle the additional stress of summer ice. He also mentioned that there is talk about having bringing a Junior Hockey Team to Willmar. The good thing about that program is that practices for that program would be during the school day with games on Friday/Saturday evenings. Steve responded that both summer ice and Junior Hockey are going to be discussed at the next City Directors meeting.

Steve spoke briefly about the Bike Friendly Community designation and application process for this to happen. There are four divisions: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. Steve is hoping to get Willmar designated in the Bronze category at a minimal. Bill Borth brought up the state of our existing trails and feels that the DNR needs to be encouraged to maintain and upgrade the Glacial Lakes Trail as it is not in the greatest repair throughout the trail.

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Carol Laumer asked about the number of biking/trail signs that were just installed along Ella Avenue and whether or not that many signs are necessary. Staff mentioned that this stretch was one of the first to get signage and that Public Works staff will analyze needs moving forward.

The next item on the agenda was the Rockin Robbins Concert Series. Steve stated that two Rotary Clubs in Willmar have chosen to host two concerts at Robbins Island Tuesday nights - July 19 with the Fabulous Armadillos and August 16 with Justin Ploof and the Throwbacks. The clubs are hoping these concerts will potentially grow into the successful concert series that St. Cloud puts on every year – Summertime by George. Summertime by George has been held the past five years and their success has allowed the Rotary Club to partner with the City of St Cloud to provide park enhancements at Eastman/Lake George Park. In addition to the concert, there are numerous other activities going on prior to and during the music, such as food vendors, artisans, bouncy house to name a few. Darin Strand said that the St. Cloud Rotary Club has been very helpful to the Willmar Rotary Club in the planning of these events.

Steve talked about the Regional Park designation for Robbins Island. Staff applied for this designation a year ago and were unsuccessful. After meeting with staff from the Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Commission staff feel that another application is warranted and is hopeful it will be successful in gaining this designation from the GMPTC.

The next agenda item was the 2016 CIP – Park Plan - \$706,000 has been allocated to invest in our park system this coming summer. Darin Strand stated that while we do not have final say in how the money is spent, we as a Board, want to give input to the City Council on what project(s) should be completed. Steve stated that this Board needs to present our advice as to what should be done and which park(s) should be included. We have \$140,000 of park equipment ready to be installed this spring at Cardinal, Collegeview, Gesch, Minnegasco, Ramblewood and Hedin Parks. This investment in playground equipment will make up for some of the approximately 20 parks that had equipment removed this past year.

A discussion followed regarding Rice Park and the plan that is proposed for this park. The proposal for Rice is to add a splash pad, three season shelter and a plaza that acts as the gathering area for these amenities. To ready the park for these additions the tennis/basketball courts and wading pool would be demolished and for the most part turned into green space and trail through the park. Pam Vruwink has been talking to various communities regarding their splash pads. There are two types – one that recirculates the water and a free flowing where the water goes down the drain. The cost we are asking to stay within is \$200,000 to \$250,000. A decision hasn't been made regarding which type to purchase. The recirculating type is more expensive and has more maintenance needs but the cost of water is much less as you reclaim the water instead of flushing it down the drain

Liz VanDerBill asked about the size of the pad, how many kids can play at once. That number would vary depending upon how many play features are installed, which hasn't been decided at this time.

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At this time, we don't know if we are going to replace the basketball courts due to numerous complaints received by the neighborhood residents in this park and would be a part of the larger park needs discussion.

Dave Baumgart asked about the removal costs. Is City staff doing this or are we hiring out? Steve responded that the tennis courts, shelter and wading pool will be hired out for removal or at least that is the initial thought concerning this work.

Darin Strand asked about the time line. Staff mentioned that the money is allocated and the sooner the decision is made regarding the projects to be completed the sooner specs can be drawn up and bids are sought for this work to start and hopefully be completed in 2016.

Pablo Obregon asked Audrey Nelsen when the City Council would meet and decide. Audrey said that we (the Joint Powers Board) need to have a final plan before we present to the Council. Pablo stated that he feels that the Board needs to make a plan to give to the City Council so we can move ahead with the park plan. Darin Strand said we should have a Plan A and Plan B. That way, if the City Council doesn't accept Plan A, we have a Plan B to give them right away instead of delaying the process by weeks. Steve responded that yes, the Board needs to make their recommendations to the Public Works Committee. Matt Dawson asked if we should come up with three options and present to the Council.

Allen Huselid stated that he understands what Audrey Nelsen is talking about with regards to doing all proposed items at Rice Park and selling it to the City Council. A question was asked as to how we anticipate questions from the City Council. Larry Kruse said we will never know if one park being completed is what the people want if we don't do one park only versus splitting to three or more parks. Pablo Obregon stated that one of the reasons he would like to see Rice Park done first is because it is the most centrally located park in the City.

Darin Strand asked what Step 1 from this group should be. Do we want to focus on Rice Park? And, do we need to do a vote? Steve Brisendine stated that the proper procedure is to bring to the Public Works Committee who will then bring to the City Council. Audrey Nelsen said she felt this is a big enough project that it could go directly to the City Council.

Pablo Obregon made a **motion** that the Joint Powers Board recommends that Rice Park be the focus and allocated the resources in the 2016 City of Willmar CIP budget, Carol Laumer **seconded this motion**. Discussion followed. Steve Brisendine said he thought it would be nice if Larry Kruse and Audrey Nelsen ask the City Council if we could go directly to the Council (bypassing the Public Works Committee). Liz VanDerBill stated that we need to have specifics of what the plan for Rice would be.

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Larry Kruse stated he felt it was best to go to the Public Works Committee. Audrey Nelsen feels that not everyone on the City Council is aware of what is in the Park Plan and thinks that, if we need to bring to the Public Works Committee, we should also bring to the City Council. Allen Huselid said we need to sell the fact that we already have six parks that will have new equipment installed as soon as the weather allows, in addition to the plan for Rice Park. **Motion Carried Unanimously**

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned. The next meeting will be February 26 and will be for the Parks/Facilities and Program Committees.